IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1 to 23 as shown in the attached appendix. The claims, as pending in the present application, read as follows:

1. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus comprising:

calculation means for calculating the degree of coincidence between a search condition being input and each information to be retrieved in said database;

determination means for determining, on the results of retrieval respectively for the plural information to be retrieved of a high degree of coincidence, the output feature amount of each result of retrieval according to each degree of coincidence; and

output means for outputting said results of retrieval with an output mode based on each output feature amount.

2. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

said database stores language information in respective correspondence with each of said information to be retrieved; and

said calculation means is adapted to execute language analysis of said retrieval condition entered by a natural language, thereby calculating a degree of language coincidence between the result of said language analysis and the language information assigned to each information to be retrieved.

3. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said output feature amount is a size of the output, and said determination means is adapted to determine a larger output size for a result of a higher degree of coincidence.

4. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said retrieval result is an image, and said output size is a size of the image.

5. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said retrieval result is a text, and said output size is a character size of the text.

6. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said retrieval result is audio data, and said output size is a loudness thereof.

7. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said retrieval result is an image or a text, and said output feature amount is a display position, and wherein said determination means determines the display position so as to be closer to a specified position for a retrieval result of a higher degree of coincidence.

8. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said specified position is a center of a display area.

9. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said determination means determines a distance from said specified position according to said degree of coincidence and determines the display positions of the retrieval results in positions at said determined distances so as to minimize mutual overlap of the retrieval results.

10. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said determination means determines the output feature amount of each retrieval result, for each of the retrieval results corresponding to the information to be retrieved of a predetermined number in a descending order of the degree of coincidence.

11. (Amended) An information retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said determination means determines the output feature amount of each retrieval result for each of the retrieval results corresponding to the information to be retrieved having degrees of coincidence exceeding a predetermined threshold value.

12. (Amended) An information retrieval method comprising:

a calculation step of calculating the degree of coincidence between a search condition being input and each information to be retrieved in said database;

a determination step of determining, on the results of retrieval respectively for the plural information to be retrieved of a high degree of coincidence, the output feature amount of each result of retrieval according to each degree of coincidence; and

an output step of outputting said results of retrieval with an output mode based on each output feature amount.

13. (Amended) An information retrieval method according to claim 12, wherein:

said database stores language information in respective correspondence with each of said information to be retrieved; and

said calculation step is adapted to execute language analysis of said retrieval condition entered by a natural language, thereby calculating a degree of language coincidence between the result of said language analysis and the language information assigned to each information to be retrieved.

14. (Amended) An information retrieval method according to claim 12, wherein said output feature amount is a size of the output, and said determination step is adapted to determine a larger output size for a result of a higher degree of coincidence.

15. (Amended) An information retrieval method according to claim 14, wherein said retrieval result is an image, and said output size is a size of the image.

16. (Amended) An information retrieval method according to claim 14, wherein said retrieval result is a text, and said output size is a character size of the text.

17. (Amended) An information retrieval method according to claim 14, wherein said retrieval result is audio data, and said output size is a loudness thereof.

18. (Amended) An information retrieval method according to claim 12, wherein said retrieval result is an image or a text, and said output feature amount is a display position and said determination step determines the display position so as to be closer to a specified position for a retrieval result of a higher degree of coincidence.

19. (Amended) An information retrieval method according to claim 18, wherein said specified position is a center of a display area.

20. (Amended) An information retrieval method according to claim 18, wherein said determination step determines a distance from said specified position according to said degree of coincidence and determines the display positions of the retrieval results in positions at said determined distances so as to minimize mutual overlap of the retrieval results.

21. (Amended) An information retrieval method according to claim 12, wherein said determination step determines the output feature amount of each retrieval result, for each of the retrieval results corresponding to the information to be retrieved of a predetermined number, in a descending order of the degree of coincidence.

22. (Amended) An information retrieval method according to claim 12, wherein said determination step determines the output feature amount of each retrieval result for each of the retrieval results corresponding to the information to be retrieved having degrees of coincidence exceeding a predetermined threshold value.

23. (Amended) A computer readable storage medium storing an information retrieval program for controlling a computer to perform information retrieval, said program comprising codes for causing the computer to perform:

a calculation step of calculating the degree of coincidence between a search condition being input and each information to be retrieved in said database;

a determination step of determining, on the results of retrieval respectively for the plural information to be retrieved of a high degree of coincidence, the output feature amount of each result of retrieval according to each degree of coincidence; and

an output step of outputting said results of retrieval with an output mode based on each output feature amount.